

Annex 1

U.S. Patent Classification - Reclassification standards

Standards Involving Class and Subclass Scope

1. USPC subclasses must be based on common invention information disclosed by the US patent documents classified in the subclasses.
2. Classes are exhaustive of the subject matter they cover.
3. Subclasses have an inclusive nature, that is, they take all the subject matter they cover in combination with other subject matter, provided the subject matter is not classified higher in the schedule.
4. Coordinate subclasses are exhaustive of the subject matter they cover, that is, the basic subject matter covered by a subclass will not be found in a coordinate subclass lower in the schedule.
5. Subclasses in a class must be based on concepts covered by the class, not those covered by another class.
6. Subclasses in a class must be provided for in the appropriate place within a class, that is, in standard sequence with subclasses covering more complex and comprehensive subject matter higher in the schedule, followed by subclasses covering less comprehensive and simpler subject matter.
7. The subject matter covered by the subclasses indented under a parent subclass must not exhaust all the documents from the parent subclass.
8. Things having different function and form must not be alternatively conjugated (e.g., “Match or mattress”) together in a single subclass.
9. Subclasses covering different species of or embodiments of subject matter provided for generically in a genus subclass must either be positioned higher in the schedule than the genus subclass or else indented under the genus subclass.
10. Every subclass included in the initial scope of a reclassification project that has its scope changed by the reclassification project, i.e. the documents classified in the subclass, must be renumbered by the project. Subclasses having their titles or schedule positions changed merely to clarify or more accurately represent the documents classified in the subclasses do not require renumbering.
11. Hierarchy between mainline primary subclasses in a class schedule is implied, and their relative superiority is determined by their relative “top-to-bottom” positions in the schedule. There is no implied relative hierarchy between mainline subclasses that are not primary subclasses, e.g. Cross-reference art collections, digests, etc.

Standards Involving Definitions and Titles

1. Titles should use art-recognized terminology whenever possible.
2. Words in titles are to be construed in their broadest sense, limited only by definitions.
3. Duplication of subclass titles should be avoided in the definitions when possible.
4. Antecedent basis for words in subclass definitions must be clear and set forth in the definitions of parent subclasses.
5. Antecedent basis for words in subclass titles must be clear and set forth in parent subclass titles.
6. The scope of subject matter encompassed by a subclass title must be equally extensive as that of the statement of basic subject matter of the subclass in the subclass definition, although the subclass definition may include notes to further limit the scope.
7. The number of features explicitly set forth in a title must equal the number of features defined in its definition.
8. A definition may not be a mere restatement of the class or subclass title.
9. A subclass title may not refer to another class or subclass.
10. A class title may not reference any subclass or class, except to numerically reference another class in the same series.
11. Registered trademarks cannot be used in class or subclass titles or definitions.
12. Negative limitations in titles and definitions must be avoided unless there exists no reasonable way to positively recite the desired limitation.
13. The conjunctive term “and” in a subclass title or definition, when used to join two or more features, is interpreted as requiring the presence of all the features it is used to join.
14. The expression “and/or” is not permitted in titles or definitions.
15. The conjunctive term “or” in a title or definition, when used to join two or more features, is interpreted as requiring the presence of one or more of the features.
16. Nouns in titles and definitions written in the plural form are interpreted as requiring the presence of multiple items.
17. Nouns in titles and definitions written in singular form are interpreted as requiring “at least one of” an item.

18. A “(s)” at the end of a word in a title is improper since under the inclusive nature of subclasses the singular form of a word is interpreted broadly to include one or more.
19. Terminology in a title does not serve as antecedent basis for terminology in a definition.
20. Terminology used in a definition does not serve as antecedent basis for terminology in a title.
21. A definition may not contain language such as “claimed” or “claimed disclosure”.
22. A subclass number previously used in a class must not be reused in the class for at least ten years.
23. Every class must include a title and definition.
24. Every new subclass must include a title and definition.

Formatting Standards For US Patent Classification

1. The title of a subclass definition must include the exact same title as that of the subclass.
2. The main statement of a subclass definition consists of two sentences: one for the hierarchy line, and one for the scope of the subject matter covered by the subclass.
3. The main statement of a subclass definition must not contain examples of what is classified in the subclass.
4. The relative order of subclasses in a class schedule is:
 1. Primary subclasses,
 2. E-Subclasses,
 3. Cross-reference art collection subclasses,
 4. Digest subclasses,
 5. FOR (foreign patent and non-patent literature) collection subclasses.
5. Class titles and mainline subclass titles must be all capitalized.
6. Indented subclass titles must have the first letter of the first word capitalized.
7. A class definition may optionally include the following sections:
 - a. LINES WITH OTHER CLASSES AND WITHIN THIS CLASS (CLASS LINES)
 - b. SUBCLASS REFERENCES TO THE CURRENT CLASS (SEE OR SEARCH THIS CLASS, SUBCLASS:)
 - c. REFERENCES TO OTHER CLASSES (SEE OR SEARCH CLASS:)

- d. REFERENCES TO OTHER CLASSIFICATION SYSTEMS
 - e. GLOSSARY
- 8. A subclass definition may optionally include the following sections:
 - a. SUBCLASS REFERENCES TO THE CURRENT CLASS
(SEE OR SEARCH THIS CLASS, SUBCLASS:)
 - b. REFERENCES TO OTHER CLASSES (SEE OR SEARCH CLASS:)
 - c. REFERENCES TO OTHER CLASSIFICATION SYSTEMS
 - d. GLOSSARY
- 9. Notes may not be included in a class or subclass title.
- 10. Graphics cannot be used in a class or subclass title.
- 11. Graphics cannot be in the class or subclass definition section “REFERENCES TO OTHER CLASSIFICATION SYSTEMS”.
- 12. Graphics cannot be embedded in text.
- 13. Class definitions may only reference another class in the optional definition sections “LINES WITH OTTHER CLASSES AND WITHIN THIS CLASS (CLASS LINES)” and “REFERENCES TO OTHER CLASSES (SEE OR SEARCH CLASS:)”.
- 14. A subclass definition may only reference another class in the optional sections “REFERENCES TO OTHER CLASSES (SEE OR SEARCH CLASS:)”.
- 15. Notes can be included in any section of a class or subclass definition except the Glossary and title.
- 16. Numerical references to subclasses in the definition section entitled “REFERENCES TO OTHER CLASSES (SEE OR SEARCH CLASS:)” must be limited to those in other class that is referenced.
- 17. The use classification symbols are not permitted in the main statement of subject matter of a class or subclass definition, nor in their glossary.
- 18. Graphics must be in tagged image file format (TIFF).
- 19. A draft class order must be in MS Word format and styled using the supplied style template.
- 20. A draft class order must contain the following sections:
 - a. Lead sheet
 - b. Class schedules (A pages)
 - c. Source and Disposition
 - d. Changes to the U.S.-to-IPC Concordance (C pages) [In class orders dealing with utility classes]

- e. Changes to the U.S.-to-Locarno Concordance [In class orders dealing with design classes]
- f. Changes to the definitions (D pages)
- g. Changes to the Index to the U.S. Patent Classification System

As noted, draft class orders must be in MS Word or RTF format.